

Hayward Hiking Club

Trail Courtesy and Safety Guidelines

All group hikes are completely voluntary on the part of the leaders and participants. Neither the Hayward Hiking Club its directors, officers, and activity leaders, nor the participants have any legal responsibility for the safety or well-being of any hiker, on hikes, for car pooling or other transportation arrangements to or from destinations, or for failure to comply with the following courtesies. Organized hikes are simply a convenient way for people to enjoy walking, nature, and the out-of-doors. Safety and the leader's guidance are incidental benefits of the group.

Leader's Functions and Courtesies

- Make advance preparations as needed; scout and be familiar with the route, acquire maps, arrange for permits.
- Have all hikers sign a "Release of Liability" and attendance form.
- Briefly describe the difficulty of the hike, especially distance and elevation gain, before departure from the meeting place so that a hiker can conveniently drop out.
- Check that all hikers have adequate amounts of water or other beverage for the distance and weather. Advise at least one quart per person, more in hot weather or on strenuous hikes. Bring a spare bottle to lend if you have one.
- Check that new or inexperienced hikers have suitable footwear and clothing for the trail and weather conditions; suggest a walking stick if needed.
- Before starting the hike identify location(s) of toilet facilities. Try to arrange facility stop(s), if available, before, during, and/or after a hike.
- At the meeting place ask any hikers carrying a cell phone to identify themselves.
- Help arrange car pools. Ask volunteer drivers to identify themselves and then let riders and drivers match up. Suggest a fairly equal distribution of riders in cars. Check to see that everyone has a ride.
- Provide directions and/or map to each driver to get to the trail head. If a car shuttle is needed, explain that plan before departure.
- At the trail head note the number of hikers. Invite the hikers to form a circle and give their names, especially if new participants are present.
- Take the attendance form with the hikers' emergency numbers along on the hike. The list can be useful for identifying a missing person.
- Find a person to act as a rear monitor. Make group counts or get rear monitor reports at least hourly and at every trail junction. It is important to keep the group together; try not to let the group expand beyond easy communication; stop and regroup if group gets spread out. Don't lose a hiker!
- Make a group count before proceeding from a lunch or other long stop.
- Hike at a pace suitable for most of the group. Consider the need for rest and water breaks. Stop at all trail junctions; a guide may be posted.
- If a person becomes disabled by injury or illness, do not leave that person alone. Ascertain the seriousness of the problem and develop a plan of action. Do not attempt first aid or treatment outside your training or ability. Assign two people to stay with the person. Assign another two to go for help if that is needed (provide map and/or directions as needed). The rest of the group may continue on. Make sure that those left have adequate water and a map of the trail and/or directions back to the trail head.

Hikers' Courtesies and Functions

- Select hikes that fit your ability and stamina. If you are new to the group, an inexperienced hiker, or unsure of what to expect, phone the leader for more information. There is no stigma for dropping out at the meeting place if the hike is beyond your ability or not what you expected. Volunteer to lead a hike to fit your preferences; there may be others with similar tastes.
- Arrive at the meeting place on time. Bring at least one quart of beverage, more on warm days or long or strenuous hikes. Bring lunch unless it is unnecessary for a specific hike. Wear suitable footwear and clothing. Removable layers are better than heavy clothes.
- If you plan to meet the group at a place other than the scheduled meeting place, contact the leader the day before. The hike location may be changed due to weather or trail conditions.
- If your return time is restricted, or you wish to return earlier than the time expected for the group, drive solo or with someone with a similar constraint. The driver determines the return time.
- Hike with the group or within sight. Pay attention to the group and where it is going so that you do not take a wrong path when the leader thinks that you are following. Unless others agree, do not take long breaks for photos, nature watching, and such things that will disrupt the flow. You owe your cooperation to the group.
- Let the leader lead and set the pace. Walk within easy voice communication. While it is OK to walk ahead briefly or to leave the group, please inform the leader at any time that you wish to split from the group. Also inform your car pool driver or riders of your intentions.
- In a situation when the group splits to take different routes to a meeting point, or some hikers wish to take a short excursion from a single point and return, be sure that the leader and hikers are informed and that the time and place of meeting are unambiguous and clearly understood and not over one hour away.
- It is customary for each rider to pay the driver the current established mileage rate and for all occupants of a car pool to share other expenses such as bridge tolls, parking and entrance fees.

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**Disregard of these courtesies has caused problems of safety or hiker enjoyment.
A little thought and consideration can have big benefits.**